

1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
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3 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
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5 OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY  
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10 In the Matter of: :  
11 :  
12 MAJOR MARINE ACCIDENT :  
13 COLLISION JAPANESE FISHERIES : NTSB Project ID  
14 TRAINING VESSEL EHIME MARU AND : No. 51701  
15 U.S. NAVY NUCLEAR ATTACK : DCA01MM022  
16 SUBMARINE USS GREENVILLE :  
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24 Recorded Interview of MICHAEL "MICKUI" NOLAN.  
25  
26

27 Monday,  
28 February 19, 2001  
29

30 BEFORE:

31  
32 INTERVIEWERS:  
33 GARY ABE  
34 NTSB  
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WITNESS:

BY MR. ABE

Michael "Mickui" Nolan

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1 EXAMINATION BY

2 GARY ABE

3 (Time: 1340.)

4 MR. ABE: My name is Gary Abe. And today  
5 is Monday, February 19, 2001. And I'm with Michael  
6 Nolan, and he has given consent to have this  
7 interview tape-recorded. And it's 10 after 7 p.m.

8 Michael, do you want me to call you  
9 "Mickui", or Michael?

10 MR. NOLAN: Either. Mickui is fine.

11 MR. ABE: Okay, Mickui. What I'd like you  
12 to do is just start off giving me your name and your  
13 address. And from that point on, I'd just like you  
14 to sort of describe your day on the USS Greenville  
15 from the time that you got on board until the time  
16 that you departed.

17 And just sort of tell your story in as much  
18 detail as you remember. And if there are some  
19 questions that I have to clarify anything, I'll ask  
20 you at that point. Okay?

21 MR. NOLAN: Um-hum.

22 MR. ABE: Okay, let's go ahead and start.

23 MR. NOLAN: My name is Michael Nolan. Many  
24 people would call me Mickui, M-i-c-k-u-i.

25 I live at (omitted).

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On February, the 9th, we had an early morning departure on the USS Greenville, somewhere around 7-8 o'clock in the morning. We were met at the parking lot outside of the Pearl Harbor base gate and escorted by a representative from the Navy, a person by the name of Rowena, to the subdock.

When we got there, we parked our vehicles there and we were greeted by the Captain, Captain Waddle, and the Chief of Staff as our escort at the sub. That's the Chief of Staff of the submarine base, under Rear Admiral Konetzni.

When we met the Captain, he introduced himself to us and he had a few words for all of us. He told us that-- he actually entreated us to speak to any member of the crew that we wanted to, that his crew would be forthcoming with any information, as long of course as it was not classified. And that probably -- in a joking way -- that we wouldn't be able to shut them up because they were so proud of what they did, and they were very confident with their jobs.

And, basically, with that then we went aboard the ship, the submarine.

We all went down into the sub while it was

1     docked at port. And the sub got underway. As it  
2     was underway, we were then asked if we would like to  
3     go up above deck, and we did.

4             At this point, we were just starting to  
5     leave Pearl Harbor. We were going through Pearl  
6     Harbor coming up past the Battleship Missouri. The  
7     Harbor, of course, is very calm.

8             And even though it was very calm, you tend  
9     to stand in the middle of the submarine because  
10    there's nothing to hold on to. And it's kind of an  
11    intimidating experience, especially if you're not I  
12    guess a submariner.

13            My wife and I stood near the main sail  
14    because we could at least lean against that. That  
15    gave us some stability. And I recall as we left  
16    that the Captain's wife was on shore. As we were  
17    passing, they exchanged greetings.

18            Before we had left, he had also mentioned  
19    that many people do make some calls to their friends  
20    and relatives when they take this trip out, so we  
21    thought that would be a great idea.

22            So we called my mother in New York and let  
23    her know that we were going out, and called Susan's  
24    dad. And as we got past the Missouri and started  
25    getting out to the mouth of Pearl Harbor, then we

1     were asked to go below decks again.   So, we did  
2     that.

3             After we went below decks, it seems to me I  
4     think we went back to the crew's mess.   That's where  
5     we had initially gone when we went down into the  
6     sub.   We went to the crew's mess.

7             We stayed in the crew's mess for a while  
8     and then the opportunity came for us to go above to  
9     the conning tower in twos and fours.   And I believe  
10    Susan and I were the last two of the group to go  
11    there.

12            So everyone was geared up with equipment so  
13    that we would be able to be attached to something  
14    there.   We would be secured, without falling off.

15            So we were all -- it was enlisted men, but  
16    they suited us all up and made sure that all the  
17    straps were properly aligned and tightened and that  
18    we were secure.

19            Then we climbed up to I guess it's the  
20    conning tower.   When we got up to the conning tower,  
21    we were met by the Captain.   And he was very  
22    cordial, spoke about his Naval career and his  
23    family.   I almost felt like I learned his whole life  
24    story, which was remarkable I thought that he was so  
25    forthcoming with everything.

1           He felt very comfortable with us. He was I  
2   guess even smoking a cigar with John Hall, a half a  
3   one. He had a couple of puffs. I guess he likes  
4   his cigars.

5           So, in the course of that conversation,  
6   because he really got into this whole thing -- and I  
7   guess it was mostly not because of myself and Susan  
8   being there, but the other two couples I think were  
9   close to his town, where he came from in Texas.

10          So he really got into a discussion about  
11   they went to the same schools, and things like that.

12   And I guess that's why he got so into his whole  
13   life with them, because he related to them.

14          And we wound up staying up there probably a  
15   lot longer than most anybody else did. Almost to  
16   the point that they kept telling him that it was  
17   time for us to go down. And he would say, "Well,  
18   I'm not finished with my story yet."

19          But, eventually, we did then go back down  
20   again. And we got out of our gear and we were  
21   actually -- took our gear off in the Captain's  
22   cabin. And we remained in the Captain's cabin for  
23   some time.

24          MR. ABE: As a group?

25          MR. NOLAN: No, just the four of us, the

1 last four of us that were there. Everyone was kind  
2 of on these little tours, I think, you know, with  
3 someone as a guide, you know, walking about the  
4 submarine, learning different things about the  
5 submarine.

6 So then, after that we toured the ship as  
7 well. We went through the crew's quarters and then  
8 down I believe into the torpedo room. In the  
9 torpedo room, of course, at each place we got  
10 briefings on all of the workings of that particular  
11 station, what they did in the torpedo room.

12 We also had a demonstration of I guess they  
13 fired some slugs. And about four of the people had  
14 a hands-on thing where they were able to fire the  
15 slug and get that -- put the equipment on us, and  
16 everything was done in a very professional manner.

17 You know, letting us know beforehand what  
18 to expect, the sounds, the pressure, that we were  
19 all equipped with the head gear so that we wouldn't  
20 have any damage to our ears.

21 Then I think also what had happened was we  
22 were given the opportunity to climb into the torpedo  
23 tube, which I declined. A little large for a  
24 torpedo tube. But, one of our party did, and they  
25 gave him some coveralls, and he climbed on down



1       there.

2                   And he wrote his name down at the very end  
3       of the torpedo tube with his little flashlight. And  
4       I believe there was one of the Kennedys had written  
5       in there.

6                   So I was very impressed that he had the  
7       nerve to go down there. But, he was happy to come  
8       out when he did come out.

9                   MR. ABE: I'm sure of that.

10                  MR. NOLAN: So, let's see. What happened?  
11       After the torpedo room, we went up to, let's see, I  
12       think the sonar room. We walked up through the ship  
13       and so we got a briefing in the sonar room with all  
14       of the equipment and saw how that worked.

15                  From the sonar room, then we went into the  
16       control room. We stayed there until lunch. And I  
17       can recall that -- I think it was second-in-command  
18       Pfeifer was rather anxious because we were all  
19       rather hungry.

20                  And I guess the Captain had gotten into  
21       another discussion. I think he was having lunch  
22       with John Hall and his wife and Mr. Clary and his  
23       wife.

24                  So they had spent probably more time than  
25       they normally have at lunch. And they kept trying

1 to send the word down that would kind of gently  
2 nudge the Captain to, you know, "We're starving up  
3 here. We'd like to have lunch."

4 So, eventually, though, it was our turn to  
5 go down to the Officer's mess. And we ate with Mr.  
6 Pfeifer. He was sitting next to me on my right at  
7 the head of the table, the Captain's seat. And Mr.  
8 Meador. He was sitting at the other end of the  
9 table. I guess they were the next two senior  
10 officers above the submarine.

11 MR. ABE: Mickui, before we go, can you  
12 talk about what you all did in the control room at  
13 this point, during this tour?

14 MR. NOLAN: Well, let's see. As I can  
15 recall, we looked at all of the controls. You know,  
16 we saw the two seats where the people drive the  
17 submarine. There were conversations going on and  
18 explanations going on about what they did, what all  
19 of these controls were.

20 And, of course, any questions that we had  
21 with regards to those instruments or what-have-you,  
22 they were answered for us and explained to us.

23 There was a number of people of course in  
24 the control room -- the plotter doing his job, and  
25 some people were talking to him and getting

1 explanations from him of what his job was.

2 They were working with the periscope as  
3 well. And I believe some people had an opportunity  
4 to take a look out the periscope. I believe I did  
5 as well. I looked at the periscope.

6 What else? I guess, after we had gotten  
7 these general briefings in there, we were just kind  
8 of waiting to go to lunch. So I didn't feel that it  
9 was any more of a briefing than any of the other  
10 places that we went to.

11 It was all very detailed and any interest  
12 you had, you spoke to them. I think I spoke to some  
13 extent with the Officer of the Deck there about a  
14 whole variety of things. You know, about Navy life,  
15 about the submarine life.

16 About, you know, how they coped with  
17 different things, and what they did for exercise.  
18 Just to find out about the men and what it was like  
19 to be on a submarine. And, you know, how they were  
20 able to cope with being confined, and how long they  
21 were at sea.

22 And, really, just learning all about them,  
23 you know. That was one of the big things about the  
24 trip, to learn about these men who were out there  
25 really protecting us, serving our country.

1           And to be able to learn about that, and  
2   then take that information and bring it back to  
3   other civilians that don't have that opportunity to  
4   let them know at least through this method about  
5   what it's all about.

6           And I was very impressed. I was impressed  
7   with the fact that a lot of them were very young, in  
8   my mind. But, at the same time, their youth didn't  
9   in any way infringe upon their professionalism,  
10   their expertise in their jobs.

11           It was extremely obvious that they were  
12   extremely competent at what they did. Just by the  
13   way they answered questions and the knowledge, the  
14   depth of knowledge, they had about everything.

15           There was never anyone that said: I don't  
16   know. They always had the answer. So that was very  
17   impressive, made you feel like very secure with  
18   where you were.

19           And you forgot, if you had any  
20   claustrophobic feelings, that you were confined. I  
21   had to -- Susan may have told you this, my wife,  
22   that she had some reservations about doing this.

23           MR. ABE: She did.

24           MR. NOLAN: And, you know, I tried to  
25   explain to her that this would be a once in a

1     lifetime opportunity for her. And that it was not  
2     like being in a World War II submarine where you're  
3     in a little tube or something because she has  
4     claustrophobic tendencies.

5             And so I didn't push her but, you know, I  
6     tried to let her make her own mind. But, she  
7     finally did. And I -- with the exception of what  
8     happened, I'm sure she was very happy that she did.

9             MR. ABE: Yes. She, I think, other than  
10    the accident, she was really glad that she did.

11            MR. NOLAN: Yes, because she learned a lot.  
12    That's what I think it was all about, to get  
13    someone who doesn't have the opportunity to have  
14    this kind of experience. I mean it's like a sponge  
15    that you're just soaking up all of this knowledge  
16    and first-hand experience.

17            It's one thing if somebody tries to tell  
18    you a story. But, to be there, to see the things,  
19    to see the people who are actually being part of it,  
20    I don't think you can get into a better learning  
21    experience.

22            And, for an adult, it's like going to  
23    school, really, but you learn immediately. You  
24    know, you're not learning ABC because you already  
25    know that.

1           And you can ask questions. You know, some  
2   of the questions initially that she brought up, you  
3   know, no one would have thought of:

4           "Why aren't there any women on board this  
5   submarine?" It became a big issue. The Chief of  
6   Staff said, "Well, we'll address this question again  
7   later, and you may have come up with the answer by  
8   then, or many answers why they weren't.

9           In fact, I came up with what I thought was  
10   a very good answer, because I had to wait for one of  
11   the wives in the head. And, you know, women have a  
12   tendency to spend a little bit more time than the  
13   men do. You get in and you're out, and they seem to  
14   dally.

15           And when you have to go, you know, you're  
16   just kind of dancing around.

17           That was another reason why I appreciated  
18   the men there because, you know, they didn't just  
19   kind of leave you hanging, you know. One of the  
20   fellows walking by me could see my anxiety.

21           He said, "Follow me, sir." He took me up  
22   to another place where I could get to a head. And  
23   so I was very grateful for that.

24           And so they were very, very helpful. They  
25   never left you alone. You always had someone around

1     that was there that was escorting you or talking to  
2     you or helping you with where you wanted to go, to  
3     be.

4             So I think, from that standpoint, it was  
5     very important. I know that, in the press, it's  
6     come out that it may have been a distraction. Some  
7     people have said, well, they could have distracted  
8     them from their duties.

9             But, I feel that, you know, this is not the  
10    first time that these people have done this. And  
11    that even in doing this and having other people on  
12    board, they were very professional in that.

13            It didn't distract from what they had to  
14    do. That had the priority. Any time there was all  
15    about what their job was, that's where they were  
16    completely at.

17            And not that we would even want to distract  
18    them from them doing their job because you would  
19    feel that might imperil you, but you never felt  
20    that. I don't think anyone in the group ever felt  
21    at any time that there was anything that they had to  
22    worry about.

23            That's how confident they made you feel.  
24    So I think that's important to mention.

25            MR. ABE: Okay, let's go ahead. Before I

1     stopped you for this clarification, you were going  
2     down into the crew's decks.

3                 MR. NOLAN:   So then we went to have lunch.  
4     And, as I said, Mr. Pfeifer sat on my right.  He  
5     was at the Captain's seat at the head of the table,  
6     and Mr. Meador was at the other end.  My wife was  
7     there.

8                 The other bulk of the civilians, the other  
9     half of the group, was there.  And we wound up  
10    having a great lunch and a great conversation and,  
11    again, talking about everything under the sun,  
12    appreciating the food that was brought to us.

13                The people that were serving from the mess,  
14    talking to them.  So it was very, very pleasant, so  
15    much so that I think we probably stayed there --  
16    also stayed there rather long, because we got the  
17    message that, you know, the Captain was -- time was  
18    running out.

19                MR. ABE:   Right.

20                MR. NOLAN:   He was going to do the final  
21    maneuvers and, you know, we've got to come up to the  
22    control room.  Because it was approaching -- I think  
23    he was supposed to come back around 2 o'clock,  
24    something like that.

25                So, we, in fact --



1 MR. ABE: By back, you mean back to?

2 MR. NOLAN: Back to Pearl Harbor.

3 So we went up to the control room, and  
4 that's when they went through these maneuvers. I  
5 think they called it the angles and dangles.

6 And as far as you had asked me for where I  
7 was standing when we were in the control room, I was  
8 on the -- I guess it's the starboard side where the  
9 firing panel is?

10 MR. ABE: Right.

11 MR. NOLAN: And I was standing right next  
12 to the passageway into the sonar room.

13 MR. ABE: Okay.

14 MR. NOLAN: In fact, when we hit some of  
15 these angles and dangles, it was obvious we had to  
16 hold on to something, but I was watching the other  
17 seamen and I just noticed they just leaned the other  
18 way.

19 And so, if you balanced yourself, you  
20 really didn't have to hold on to anything. And so  
21 Susan, my wife, was of course holding on. And I was  
22 making sure I had a good grip on her so she didn't  
23 go flying the other way.

24 I said, "Susan, just lean this way." And I  
25 was very proud of myself that, look, I've got my

1     sealegs. Here I just lean this way, and that was a  
2     great experience in and of itself.

3             And it was very impressive that the force  
4     of that boat, how it could maneuver through the  
5     water. And you could appreciate the maneuvers by  
6     the way it moved and your balance changed.

7             The Captain had even made something before  
8     he started his maneuvers, a statement to the effect  
9     that:

10            "You know, we'll see how well the crew is  
11     prepared for this. I don't want to hear any things  
12     falling, and everything should be secure, and this  
13     will be a test for them."

14            And so we went through all of those  
15     maneuvers. From where I was standing, I was facing  
16     into the control room. And some of the angles  
17     sometimes actually had me leaning through the entry  
18     way into the sonar room because of the distinctness  
19     of the way they were going up and down.

20            I was looking at the Captain. The Captain  
21     was right at the periscopes, right in front of the  
22     periscopes, looking at the entire control panel from  
23     about where the first guy steering sits for the  
24     second guy steering and focusing, you know, very  
25     intently on the panel and giving the commands and

1 the orders about what exactly they were doing.

2 MR. ABE: At this point, all the guests  
3 were observers.

4 MR. NOLAN: Yes.

5 MR. ABE: No one was sitting in any  
6 operating seats?

7 MR. NOLAN: No. Mr. Hall was sitting like  
8 -- there was a seat that was like facing the next  
9 passageway that went to the -- that came through  
10 from the mess hall. I guess it was the middle one.  
11 It was next to the first steering position.

12 MR. ABE: Okay.

13 MR. NOLAN: And I think Mr. Clary was  
14 sitting there next to him as well.

15 So, as we were going through all of these  
16 angles and dangles, we were all just observers.

17 MR. ABE: So the helm and the plane were by  
18 the crew.

19 MR. NOLAN: Yes.

20 MR. ABE: And then the seats off to the  
21 side looking into the entrance, looking from the  
22 periscope to the entrance, that --

23 MR. NOLAN: There were some seats right in  
24 front. I mean it's like not at the periscope but in  
25 front of that whole structure there, almost right in

1 front of the doorway entrance.

2 MR. ABE: Okay.

3 MR. NOLAN: And I don't know if those seats  
4 were supposed to be there or if they put them there  
5 for them.

6 MR. ABE: There was three? There were  
7 three seats?

8 MR. NOLAN: But I know that they were  
9 sitting there. And, it seemed to be, you know, the  
10 easiest way, they didn't have to really worry about  
11 holding on to anything because they were sitting  
12 down and the seats were secure.

13 And so they didn't have to hold on to  
14 something when they went through these maneuvers.

15 MR. ABE: Okay.

16 MR. NOLAN: Then we came to the point where  
17 they were going to do the emergency blow. This was  
18 the last event before we were ready to do back into  
19 Pearl Harbor.

20 I know this is an important time. Again,  
21 as I said, I was standing facing the Captain.

22 MR. ABE: Do you have any idea about what  
23 time this is we're talking about now?

24 MR. NOLAN: I never looked at a clock on  
25 that whole trip. I mean you were just so intense

1 with everything that was going on.

2 MR. ABE: Sure.

3 MR. NOLAN: And the experience, it was just  
4 riveting.

5 MR. ABE: Okay.

6 MR. NOLAN: But I was just really intent  
7 on, I mean, the Captain was the man in charge. He  
8 really had my attention.

9 And I know that they went up to periscope  
10 depth again so they could check to see if there was  
11 anything out there.

12 And I'm not sure which officer or crewman  
13 did it first, but one of the crew did the first 360  
14 degree look.

15 That was immediately followed by the  
16 Captain, who did two 360-degree looks. And he  
17 didn't just quickly do it either. He stopped and  
18 looked, and stopped and looked. And as he went  
19 around, this other crewman walked on like opposite  
20 him.

21 If the Captain was on that side of the  
22 periscope, as it moved around, this crewman just  
23 walked with him. And so that was the procedure that  
24 happened.

25 Then, the Captain left the control room and

1     went through that door where Mr. Hall was seated  
2     next to the helmsman and came into the sonar room.

3             MR. ABE:    Okay.

4             MR. NOLAN:   And I know that because, like I  
5     said, I was standing in the doorway of the sonar  
6     room.  Then of course I see him there, and he  
7     started checking the sonar, I guess, looking to see  
8     if he could see anything there.  And he was in there  
9     for a while.

10            Then he came --

11            MR. ABE:    So the CO went into the sonar  
12     room?

13            MR. NOLAN:   Yes.    Yes.

14            MR. ABE:    Okay.

15            MR. NOLAN:   Went into the sonar room,  
16     checked that.  Then, after he was in there for a  
17     while and checked that, he came out and took his  
18     position again where he was before.

19            I believe that Mr. Pfeifer remained in the  
20     sonar room and said, "Okay, I will watch the sonar  
21     while, you know, you are on the bridge," or whatever  
22     they call that.

23            It was at that time that he had made an  
24     announcement at some point in time before that  
25     asking Mr. Hall if he would like to do the emergency

1 blow. And Mr. Hall said yes, he would.

2 And he asked Mr. Clary if he would like to  
3 sit at the -- I guess that's the helmsman, his seat.  
4 And he said okay.

5 And he said, "I'll tell you when to get up  
6 from those seats to do this."

7 So, when they were ready to do this  
8 procedure, then Mr. Hall got up and went to the port  
9 side to where these mechanisms are.

10 MR. ABE: Right.

11 MR. NOLAN: So I'm looking at him and I see  
12 his back. He's up there like this, his hands on the  
13 instruments.

14 And let's see, who else did something?  
15 Todd Thoman's wife, I believe it was, Deanda.

16 MR. ABE: Todd? What's her name?

17 MR. NOLAN: Deanda. With a "D".

18 MR. ABE: Okay.

19 MR. NOLAN: She did, you know, I guess they  
20 sounded this horn like three times. And so she did  
21 that. And, actually, she had to be assisted with  
22 that because she couldn't press it hard enough, I  
23 guess, and so one of the crewman held her hand while  
24 they did that, three times.

25 Then, Mr. Hall, you know, I forget what he

1     said.  He said something about getting ready to do  
2     the emergency blow.  And then he hit the valves and  
3     you could hear the ballast I guess being flooded, or  
4     expelled, or whatever it does, and counted out then  
5     "one, 1,000..." something.  He was yelling out some  
6     numbers.

7             MR. ABE:  This is Mr. Hall?

8             MR. NOLAN:  Yes, Mr. Hall.

9             And Mr. Clary was at that point in time in  
10    the helmsman seat as well.  And then we started to  
11    go up.  And --

12            MR. ABE:  Let me ask you this.

13            MR. NOLAN:  Yes.

14            MR. ABE:  Make this point.

15            What type of supervision was Mr. Hall and  
16    Mr. Clary, I guess?  Were there crew members near  
17    by?

18            MR. NOLAN:  Almost on top of them.

19            MR. ABE:  Can you describe that?

20            MR. NOLAN:  Well, whoever the men were that  
21    normally would do that, I mean they were right  
22    there.  They were telling him exactly what to do.  
23    And it was almost a hands on hands kind of scenario.

24            I couldn't really see Mr. Clary as clearly  
25    as I saw Mr. Hall because he was kind of -- Mr.



1 Clary was kind of -- his position was kind of  
2 obscured from me.

3 Especially when we were in this ascent.

4 MR. ABE: Okay.

5 MR. NOLAN: Once we started going up, I  
6 think -- and I can't really remember specifically  
7 but I think they were calling out either the speed  
8 or as we were going, so we got the sensation of the  
9 feeling of just how fast this boat was going up.

10 MR. ABE: For instance, for Mr. Clary and  
11 Mr. Hall, when you said the crew members were almost  
12 on top of him, was that like -- can you describe  
13 that in a sense of -- like for Mr. Clary, who was in  
14 the helmsman's seat, was he driving the boat?

15 MR. NOLAN: I couldn't tell. I mean he was  
16 sitting in the seat.

17 MR. ABE: Okay.

18 MR. NOLAN: And I really didn't look that  
19 much upon it because, you know, like I said, he was  
20 kind of obscured. And because he wasn't saying  
21 anything, you know, it didn't look like he was doing  
22 anything.

23 So, you know, my attention was not drawn to  
24 him at all. But I knew that he was in the seat  
25 because he was told that now is the time for him to

1 go sit in the seat, just before that maneuver.

2 And I can remember Mr. Hall calling out and  
3 his hands spread like this on these instruments to  
4 blow the ballast, or whatever it was.

5 MR. ABE: Was there a crew member who also  
6 had his hands on the switches?

7 MR. NOLAN: I can't remember.

8 MR. ABE: Okay.

9 MR. NOLAN: I can't remember. I can't say  
10 that I actually see that in my mind.

11 MR. ABE: Okay. Fine.

12 MR. NOLAN: Anything else?

13 MR. ABE: No.

14 MR. NOLAN: So we're going up and as we  
15 were -- you could feel that we had broken the  
16 surface because it was like the incline, the  
17 steepness of the incline kind of fell off as the  
18 boat was coming up on to the surface.

19 And it seemed just as that happened, we get  
20 this huge boom. I mean it was a boom. The way --  
21 that's how they must have come up with this word  
22 "boom"--

23

24 -- because literally and it was a loud  
25 boom. And I could visibly see the Captain, you

1 know, react to it. And as Mr. Hall had said, his  
2 words were, "Jesus, what the hell was that?"

3 And in the next instance, there was maybe  
4 two or three seconds -- not even two or three  
5 seconds. Maybe, a second or two -- all of a sudden  
6 then, the whole boat shuddered.

7 And in retrospect, I realize now that what  
8 that was the stern, fin, whatever they call that,  
9 that had to be hitting the boat.

10 What I thought was happening, what scared  
11 me at that time -- I was not as scared of the boom  
12 as I was of the shudder. I thought the submarine  
13 was breaking apart.

14 And so I, you know, you get that initial  
15 feeling of, you know, panic.

16 MR. ABE: Right.

17 MR. NOLAN: So that subsided when I didn't  
18 see any water or anything coming in. And we were  
19 immediately, I mean the crew went into like  
20 instantaneous reaction.

21 And we were immediately taken off the --  
22 out of the control room and taken to the crew's  
23 mess.

24 MR. ABE: When you say -- can you describe  
25 what the crew's reaction was? I mean you said they

1 immediately...?

2 MR. NOLAN: I mean it was -- I think it was  
3 Mr. Pfeifer came out of the sonar room and took his  
4 position on the bridge there.

5 The Captain stepped back.

6 Who else was there? The Chief of Staff was  
7 on the starboard side also. And I think he stepped  
8 back so as to kind of get out of the way so that,  
9 you know, all the men could do their job.

10 So it's like everybody just kind of sprung  
11 into action to handle whatever this emergency was.

12 MR. ABE: Was Mr. Clary still in his seat?

13 MR. NOLAN: I don't know.

14 MR. ABE: Okay.

15 MR. NOLAN: I don't know. I was the last  
16 one to leave there. But I mean we were out of there  
17 in it seemed like seconds.

18 MR. ABE: Okay.

19 MR. NOLAN: And, as I said, we were  
20 escorted back down into the crew's mess. I think  
21 Mr. Hall was in front of me at some point in time.  
22 Actually, he was in front of me when we left the  
23 crew's mess.

24 We got into the crew's mess and the thing  
25 that -- I don't know if the word is "shocked" or it

1 surprised me or that I was amazed to see was that  
2 they had these monitors on, you know, the screens  
3 that show what's going on on the surface.

4 And the shock was there was this boat  
5 there.

6 MR. ABE: You saw the boat?

7 MR. NOLAN: Oh, yes. That's -- the fact  
8 that I was seeing it, I said "Why are they not  
9 looking at this? Do they actually know that this is  
10 on?"

11 And we were just like mesmerized by this  
12 thing. And the size of this boat, I mean the waves,  
13 it was really choppy and this thing was just  
14 bouncing around.

15 Almost as soon as we got in there and sat  
16 down, the crew was rushing in to the mess with all  
17 kinds of equipment and setting up, you know, to take  
18 care of any emergency, any survivors, any people  
19 that were injured.

20 And so it was obvious that they had to get  
21 us out of there. In the meantime, this -- this  
22 vessel is going down. So, as we're leaving and  
23 everybody is leaving, I was the last one to leave  
24 the crew's mess.

25 And I stopped at the door to wait. I don't

1 know why I had to see it but I had to see that ship  
2 go down. And that was the last thing I saw before I  
3 left there, was that it went on down.

4 MR. ABE: How long do you think it took?

5 MR. NOLAN: I don't think it took more than  
6 five minutes, to tell you the truth. It was fast.  
7 It went down.

8 MR. ABE: Did you see any --

9 MR. NOLAN: Survivors?

10 MR. ABE: -- survivors?

11 MR. NOLAN: That was the other thing that  
12 later occurred to me. I said, "You know, all I  
13 could see was the ship. I couldn't literally see  
14 any people." I don't know if they were too small or  
15 what, but it was just that boat there.

16 And the thing that impressed me was it, you  
17 know, looked like a big boat. It wasn't just a  
18 little, tiny boat. And it went down extremely fast.

19 From the time that we -- I'm sure that it  
20 wasn't more than five minutes. So, later, when we  
21 were actually back out on top of the submarine and  
22 we could see the damage to the tail of the sub where  
23 all of the paint was removed from it, then it was  
24 obvious was the shudder was that part of the  
25 submarine must have been cutting through the hull of

1     that boat.

2                   And I would think that that's why it went  
3     down so fast. I mean I'm not an expert by any means  
4     but my own logic will tell me that a vessel of that  
5     weight moving through the water that fast coming up  
6     and hitting anything is not going to be stopped by  
7     anything. That had to be like a knife cutting  
8     through that hull.

9                   And it must have just "ssshhsss" cut right  
10    through it, and that's why it went down so fast.

11                  I don't think that the initial boom was  
12    anything more than possibly a dent in both hulls.  
13    But I think that rudder going through, that whole  
14    shuddering of the boat, was, you know, until you  
15    look at that other boat, we're not going to really  
16    know.

17                  But, if I were to take a guess, that's what  
18    I would guess. I mean it may have been that when  
19    the hulls collided, they put a big hole in it.

20                  But, I think that the real damage may have  
21    come from that. Again, that's all speculation on my  
22    part just from what I saw of the damage to, you  
23    know, because it was like the paint was all removed  
24    from it. And I was amazed it wasn't bent or  
25    anything like that.

1           That thing must be one solid piece.

2           MR. ABE:   During that time you were in the  
3   crew's mess, was the intercom on?  And, if so --

4           MR. NOLAN:  Did we hear anything?

5           MR. ABE:  Can you remember conversations  
6   and--

7           MR. NOLAN:  I was so mesmerized by this  
8   ship.  I mean I just could not believe it.  I mean I  
9   was literally in disbelief that I was seeing this  
10   boat there because, in my mind, I said, "How could  
11   we have hit anything?  How could we not know that --  
12   this is a military submarine.  This is what they do.  
13   How could we not know?"

14           And the thing that occurred to me was, you  
15   know, is that it had to be a sonar problem.  I mean  
16   I would have thought that that's what sonar is for,  
17   to detect other boats.

18           I mean if this was -- if we were at war,  
19   you certainly wouldn't want to come up under the  
20   enemy like that, would you?

21           MR. ABE:  No.

22           MR. NOLAN:  So that's, in my mind, that's  
23   what I thought had happened.  That there was  
24   something wrong with the sonar, because they went  
25   through everything.  I mean they didn't do anything



1 in a haphazard manner.

2 The Captain was very, very thorough. I was  
3 extremely impressed with how loyal his crew was to  
4 him. They had a special bond where he called up --  
5 he didn't call him "ensign" or "private" or  
6 whatever. He called them "Shipmates". You know,  
7 "Shipmate."

8 And he was like a teacher. You know, any  
9 time he had to tell somebody something, he would --  
10 he had a special way of doing it.

11 And we found with talking to, I mean, there  
12 were some senior chiefs there that had had many  
13 years' experience. Some of the crew didn't have  
14 that much experience. I mean enough so they were  
15 responsible where they were, but obviously this was  
16 important training for them as well.

17 I think they were getting ready to go out  
18 on a mission. And so having this kind of training  
19 was not for our benefit, it was for their benefit.

20 I even believe, in speaking to one of the  
21 crew, one of them had mentioned that, you know, he  
22 had gotten out of the Submarine Corps and was doing  
23 other things in the Navy, but came back because of  
24 Captain Waddle, just to serve under him.

25 So, obviously, he commanded a tremendous

1 amount of respect and confidence from his men. And  
2 we were -- I think he spoke to everyone. I'm sure.

3 I would be very surprised if every civilian that  
4 you've spoken to has had nothing but glowing things  
5 to say about this Captain.

6 We all feel, as badly as we feel for the  
7 people that lost their lives and the people that had  
8 to go into the water, we feel just as bad for him  
9 because here's a man that seemed to me to be on his  
10 way to a fantastic career.

11 He had Admiral stamped all over him. And  
12 to have it snatched away in an instant is almost --  
13 almost an Act of God because for the life of me,  
14 reason cannot explain to me how this happened.

15 It wasn't because of neglect, that's for  
16 sure.

17 MR. ABE: In going back, do you remember  
18 hearing anything on the intercoms while you were in  
19 there?

20 MR. NOLAN: As I said --

21 MR. ABE: No?

22 MR. NOLAN: -- I was just so riveted by  
23 this whole experience, this disbelief of this boat  
24 being there, that we had hit it, it was surreal.

25 MR. ABE: Can you -- do you remember, or

1     can you describe your thoughts on I guess the  
2     environment in the ship at that time?

3                 I mean were people -- the type of activity,  
4     I guess, that was going on?

5                 MR. NOLAN: Well, now that you mention it,  
6     now you did remind me of something that I do recall  
7     that was announced over the speakers.

8                 And it was the Captain telling them to go  
9     about their jobs, to be calm in doing it, to take it  
10    back a notch. They had trained for these  
11    circumstances and to do the jobs that they were  
12    trained for in the most professional way that they  
13    knew how to. And just do everything by the numbers.

14                So it was kind of a calming thing to his  
15    crew because the crew, I mean their adrenalin was  
16    up. I mean this is something that no one, you know,  
17    vaguely, even in their wildest imagination  
18    anticipated or expected.

19                But, when we went down from the crew's  
20    room, we went down to the torpedo room. John Hall  
21    and myself, we even helped out by -- there's like a  
22    gaff that they have there. And we helped untie the  
23    gaff. I took the gaff and helped him to take it up  
24    topside.

25                We just stayed there. Periodically, we'd

1     have the -- the Chief of Staff would come down and  
2     give us a report.

3                 MR. ABE:   Where were you at this time now?

4                 MR. NOLAN:   In the torpedo room.

5                 MR. ABE:   Okay.

6                 MR. NOLAN:   I was standing right at the  
7     door to the torpedo room, so I was the first one to  
8     come through.

9                 The doctor came down, the guy that they  
10    call "Doc", the medic, and he brought down seasick  
11    pills. That sub on top of the surface was just  
12    rocking and rolling. So the women and the men were,  
13    you know, getting to that point where they were  
14    turning green.

15                So he was there for anybody that needed any  
16    help. He brought some water down. He passed some  
17    pills around to whoever needed them.

18                And then, at one time, I can't recall who  
19    it was that came down -- oh, it was one of the black  
20    shipman. He came down and asked if anybody had a  
21    phone because I think they were having trouble with  
22    their radio. They were having difficulty reaching  
23    the men.

24                So they figured if somebody has a phone,  
25    they could make, you know, an international call.

1           So John Hall gave them his phone and I gave  
2   them mine. And they came back in a matter of  
3   minutes with our phones because they apparently had  
4   made contact.

5           Then they came down and asked if anybody  
6   spoke Chinese as initially the first language there,  
7   did anybody speak Chinese.

8           Then, a couple of minutes later, they came  
9   down and asked "Does anybody speak Japanese?"

10          Apparently, they had a language problem.  
11   Apparently, the people who were now I guess in the  
12   life rafts, they were trying to communicate to them  
13   and no one spoke English.

14          So they were asking if anybody could speak  
15   the language. Nobody could speak Chinese, nobody  
16   could speak Japanese. We couldn't help them in that  
17   regard.

18          MR. ABE: Before you go on, when the Chief  
19   of Staff came down to the torpedo room, what did he  
20   say?

21          MR. NOLAN: Well, he was very forthright  
22   that, you know, we had hit this other ship. And,  
23   well, of course we all knew that because we saw it.  
24   And, you know, he was just kind of giving us  
25   reports on the rescue.

1           You know, I believe, and again it's not  
2   like as clear as a bell to me.

3           MR. ABE:   Sure.

4           MR. NOLAN:   But --

5           MR. ABE:   Anything you have to say will be  
6   real helpful.

7           MR. NOLAN:   I can remember -- this was kind  
8   of after the fact.  You know, this was the Coast  
9   Guard was on its way.  And the Captain had I guess -  
10   - this may have even been after the Coast Guard had  
11   rescued the--

12          MR. ABE:   The Captain being the Chief of  
13   Staff?

14          MR. NOLAN:   Captain Waddle.

15          MR. ABE:   Okay.

16          MR. NOLAN:   Because this rang in my mind.  
17   And I even think Mr. Thoman had said it in his  
18   interview with Matt Lauer.

19                It was that he told everyone that they  
20   should each write down what they experienced  
21   immediately because it could change.  Not to  
22   embellish anything...

23                (TAPE CONCLUDED.)